

A
SURPRISING ACCOUNT
OF THE 10880. 166. 4.
CAPTIVITY AND ESCAPE - 4.

OF
PHILLIP M'DONALD & ALEX. M'LEOD,

k OF VIRGINIA,

FROM THE

Chikkemogga Indians,

AND OF THE GREAT DISCOVERIES IN THE WESTERN
WORLD.

From June 1779, to January 1786, when they returned in health
their friends, after an absence of six years and an half.

WRITTEN BY THEMSELVES.

PRINTED AT RUTLAND, VERMONT,
BY JOSIAH FAY, FOR S. WILLIAMS & CO.

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PHILIP McDONALD & ALEX. M. LEOD,

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MCCLEARY

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at his Book-Store in Hanover, N. H.*

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gious Ignorance—Sermon preached to the Free Masons, at the dedication of Franklin Lodge, Cheshire, Massachusetts, very entertaining, by John Leland—Life of Joseph—Henry Allen's Hymns—Lucy Allen's, do.—Conversion of two girls, and others—Leland's Funeral Oration—Prior's (a Methodist) Funeral Sermon—Wesley's Epistle to Whitefield—Life of Judas Iscariot—Caveat against Popery—Fletcher's Life—Methodist's remonstrance—Ryland's funeral Sermon—Besides a number of small Pamphlets.

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INTRODUCTION.

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THE accounts received from the OHIO, of the discovery of ancient fortifications, and the jaw teeth, thigh bones, &c. of certain animals though recorded by a *Parsons* a *Sullivan*, and other esteemed personages, and some of the curiosities deposited in Newhaven College, yet the truth of the matter is doubt, by many, and the veracity the of writers called in question. Probably the truth of this little narrative may be doubted; but as the narrators are well known by many, and the reality of their sufferings evident from the marks of their mutilated bodies, they doubt not that the account of their extraordinary discoveries, will be highly pleasing to the public in general.

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of the simplicity of our journey. It was just about
eight o'clock in the evening of the 17th of June, when
descending the river of the Ohio, we were let down
in a boat on the river of a boat, which one of our
company had killed about two hours before; our
company were about thirty yards distant; our
little company was happy in their repose as good food
and I keep appetites could make them; and the fear of
an enemy finally banished their own minds, when we
were let on by a party of a few Indians of the Ohio
Indians, and that one of ten, of which number
our company consisted, were killed instantly, and two
others to badly wounded as to be unable to move. It
may be better said than I can express, how absolutely
we were terrified, and how we were for consolation,
and how we were from their hands.

*****!*****

My friend, An opening towards the place where our
arms were deposited, which we eagerly took

Surprising Account, &c.

lives as best as we could, we fought all our power
at the enemy. The Indians were now rushing

IT was early in the month of May, in the year
1779, that the narrators, Philip M'Donald, of Edinburgh,
lately resident in Virginia, and Alexander M'Leod of
Scotch descent, born in Williamsburgh, Virginia,
and educated, as well as that of the Continent
could afford, left the place of our residence to join the
American army as volunteers against the Indians —
Our offer was graciously accepted, and we soon had an
opportunity, not only to shew our courage in combat-
ing those brutal enemies, the Indians, but almost fa-
tally, to be made acquainted with their horrid cruel-
ties. We were detached with a party, to make dis-
coveries, and reconnoitre the situation of a number of
Indians supposed to be in the vicinity. After a tedious
scout of three or four days, we were almost worn out with
fatigue, and being destitute of necessaries, we determin-
ed to return to the main body, but were soon convinced
of

of the impracticability of our schemt. It was just about eight oclock in the evening of the 17th of June, when, not being apprehensive of danger, we were set down to supper on the quarter of a deer, which one of our company had killed about two hours befor ; our arms and ammunition were about thirty yards distant ; our little company as happy in their repast as good food and keen appetites could make them ; and the fear of an enemy entirely banished from our minds, when we were fired on by a party of a 20 Indians, of the Chik-kemogga nation, and four out of ten, of which number our company consisted, were killed instantly, and two others so badly wounded as to be unable to move. It may be easier conceived than described, how astonished we were at this salute, but no time for consideration, was given, for the savages, rising from their ambush had nearly surrounded us, at the distance of about thirty yards. An opening towards the place where our arms were deposited, was left which we eagerly took the advantage of, and got safe to the spot : by this time we were totally surrounded, but determining to sell our lives as dear as we could, we discharged all our pieces at the enemy.—The surviving Indians now rushed on, and disarmed us in a moment, and, from their behaviour, we had every reason to expect a horrid and immediate death, but Providence had otherwise decreed.

The dead Indians, nearly doubled our number, were no sooner buried, than the state of the surviving part of our little company was examined, and from the looks and gestures of the Indians, we could easily perceive a massacre was intended, and one of the party who could speak English, insulting asked us, if we would not have a little more roast meat, and which of us would chose to be roasted. As we well knew that no humiliation would move them to pity, we offered them every insult in our power, to induce them to dispatch us instantly, but all in vain ; their horrid thirst for cruelty and torture, was not to be so easily disappointed.

A great

A great fire was now made, and the two unfortunate creatures, who as before related, were badly wounded, named Thomas Hudsp, and William Gradnow, of Pennsylvania, were stript naked, and bound fast to the top of two saplings, previously cleared of limbs and bark for the horrid business. The saplings were just strong enough to keep their enfeebled bodies in an erect position, another sapling rather larger, was now pruned of its limbs, and bent down so as to reach the heads of the victims, by the weight of two Indians, who with their knives cut round the skin of each of the foreheads to the back of the neck, and skinned it a little way, fastened their hair to the tree, and jumping from the tree, it tore the scalp off in an instant. They then threw hot coals and embers on their heads; after this they pierced their bodies all over, and stuck them full of pitch pine splinters, dipt in turpentine; even in their very eyes some of these instruments of torture were placed, and set on fire. The poor unfortunate creatures, under these dreadful tortures, were suffered to remain about half an hour, when the split pieces of pitch pine beforementioned being wholly consumed, or extinguished by their blood, the infernal savages brought fire and placed under their feet, burning them by degrees till their entrails dropped into them, and the whole carcases consumed to ashes.

After this horrid and unnatural tragedy, we were carried on for six days through the woods into the Ohio country without making any stop. Here our other two companions were unable to proceed any further, by reason of their wounds, and were therefore massacred in a manner equally cruel as the others, being roasted to death by such slow degrees, as to be near fourteen hours in the extremity of torture.

After six days further very severe travel, we arrived at a large town. Here we were met by a great number of Indians, men, women and children, who were no sooner acquainted with the loss they had sustained by

our means than they determined on putting us to the torture for revenge: We were both accordingly stripped; and whipped by every Indian present, till at length we fainted with loss of blood. After remaining some time in this condition, we were removed into a wigwam, under a strong guard of Indians to be kept a few days, till the arrival of another party, expected from the westward, who were going to war against the Americans, when we were to be sacrificed. But this horrid scene we providentially escaped in the following remarkable manner.

The sixth night after our dreadful punishment, we awoke, and perceiving that four out of six of our guard were asleep, and the others in a defenceless posture, as our foreness made them think we could do them no harm; being both unbound and two or three tomahawks lying within reach, we determined to make an attempt to escape; we communicated our intention by signs to each other, and seizing the tomahawks, sunk them in an instant into the heads of the waking Indians. We killed the others likewise, without any noise & snatching up our knapsacks and clothes that lay in one corner of the wigwam, and taking each of us a knife, tomahawk and musket, we issued forth, and travelling all night, reached the top of a high mountain, here we tarried near a week, feeding on roots, &c. till our wounds began to heal, and then pursued our route along the mountain, bearing to descend in the vallies, lest we should fall into the hands of the inhuman savages, which we dreaded worse than death itself. It was now, according to our calculation, about the middle of Aug. and we had travelled near twelve days, improving every hour we could in a due west direction. We were arrived at a part of the country beautiful to view, the air was serene, the trees at so great a distance as almost to bear the appearance of a cleared up country, for a considerable distance round and a variety of animals passed us, seemingly inoffensive, within a few rods of us, & would stop and graze near us. Our surprize was very great.

great; it was some time since we had tasted flesh, and appetite prompted us to desire it; we had gathered a variety of fruits that answered very well for bread, but we felt a reluctance at the thought of destroying creatures feeding peaceably around us. We had ranged about for some time in search of a spring, when we at length came to one, on the side of a hill that laid open to the sun. We dipped up a cup full and tasted of it, when we were surprised to find it saltier than brine; & observed the channel in which it flowed, perceived the margin was covered with a thin crust of pure white salt, of which we scraped up a considerable quantity, returning grateful thanks to providence for so great a favor.

We now determined to make use of our newly acquired treasure, to prepare a little food for prosecuting our journey westward, as we were not yet freed from our fear of the Indians. With this view we shot one of the peaceful tenants of the woods, whose body was about the size of a sheep, and most delicious food. We corned our meat, and should have stayed in this beautiful place a long time, but our fears of the Indians prevented. We found in this pleasant retreat, trees that bore a sort of fruit that tasted sweet, and much like a good pear, when first gathered, but after being dried a few days, tasted like new bread.

We began to gather and prepare our bread, and in about four days set forward again, with all the expedition we could, being still haunted with the dread of the savages. We travelled on at a great rate, for a long time, finding such a plenty of delicious wild fruits, that we scarcely ever eat more than one meal a day of our preserved food.

We reckoned now, that it must be about the latter part of Sept. and as we had travelled at a great rate, we thought ourselves out of the reach of the hostile Indians; and thinking so beautiful a country must be de-

signed for the sustenance of some favored beings, we determined to descend into the vallies, and make what discoveries we could.

We had passed several small rivers on logs, and trunks of trees, &c. which we found blown down, and lying near the banks; but after travelling in the low lands about three weeks longer, in our old due west course, we arrived at the bank of a large river, or sea. We thought now that all our journeying westward, was at an end; however, after traveling along the bank of the river a few days, we discovered a canoe with paddles in it; this circumstance made us fear we were near some nations of Indians; and as we were afraid of falling into the hands of savages, we determined to embark, although the wind blew high from the east, and accordingly jumping into the canoe, we soon rigged up a sort of a mast, and committed ourselves to the mercy of the winds and waves.

We had, when we went on board, about ten days provision, which we determined to husband to the best advantage, as we were uncertain what provisions we should find on the western shore.

It was about the middle of the afternoon when we embarked, and as we sailed at a great rate, we were soon out of sight of the land; however, as the wind seemed rather to fall than rise, and as the weather was clear, we apprehended no danger, but put on before the wind, in cheerful expectation of reaching the western shore next morning. But alas! about midnight we were hurried away by a swift southwest current, at an inconceivable swift rate, without any prospect of release from it, and without any appearance of a western shore.

After being carried at a surprising rate for fifteen days, towards evening we perceived the current gradually change its course, and set to the west, and that its force considerably abated. Our provisions were now exhausted to the last morsel, but we had some hopes of

relief, as we had worked our boat into the eddy, and were got into a creek, with a pleasant shore on each side, on which, to our inexpressible joy, we soon effected a landing, and feasted on the spontaneous luxuries of nature, with which the shore abounded.

Here we must mention, with admiration, the surprising beneficence of Deity, in replenishing the earth with every necessary and even luxury, for the sustenance of his dependant creatures. Here we found a fine well watered country, beautiful to behold; the trees were exceeding high and large, and at a great distance from each other. and so little underbush, that a man may easily have cleared an acre in two days. The wild fruits were excellent, and the spontaneous growths of the earth were beyond all description luxuriant. We had not travelled far in the level country, before we reached a large plain kind of tract, free from every sort of vegetation, and resembling a road in America: On seeing this, we concluded we must be near some sort of inhabitants, but as we were uncertain of what sort they might be, we trembled with apprehension. We lifted up our hearts and voices to heaven for protection, and relying on the merciful care of providence, we determined to prosecute our journey along the beaten path, until we arrived at some place of dwelling for human beings. We had not been travelling long in the road, before we distinctly heard a human voice at a small distance from us, and by the sound we were led to conclude the speaker was not of the Indian tribe, with whom we had been acquainted. We stopped for some time, irresolute and undetermined whether to proceed or retire; when we were suddenly surprised by a human figure, who, with amazing agility jumped from a rock into the road, and walked towards us in seeming astonishment. His stature and bulk appeared to be equal to that of the Patagonians, as related by modern voyagers; his aspect open and free from that savage fierceness so conspicuous in the American Indians in general. The first sight of this monster almost petrified

ed us with terror ; but on his nearer approach, he exclaimed in the Hebrew language—what creatures can these be ? On hearing him speak, tho' imperfectly, a language which we understood, who can express our joy ? The sudden transition had almost proved fatal to us ; we immediately begged him, in the same language, not to kill us. He was pleased beyond measure to hear us speak, and told us to apprehend no danger from him, for he belonged to a race of beings that never intentionally did harm to any creature.

We were wholly relieved from our fears by this declaration, and after about an hour's travel, upon a rising hill, we discovered a large regular built city before us, in appearance, but when we came to it our astonishment was greatly increased. The houses were beautiful and lofty, tho' consisting of but two stories, and the people appeared to be exceeding kind and tractable.

Mr. M'Donald having been educated at the University at Edinburgh, could understand their language perfectly well, and communicated to them the history of Europe, at which they were much surprised. In return they informed us, that they had ancient records, which we might see.

In examining the records, we discovered that they were originally from Asia, and most probably separated from that continent soon after the flood. They have a tradition among them, that a long time ago, their progenitors were miraculously planted there by the Being they adore, on the happy spot they at present possess, which is a fertile island, according to our computation two thousand miles in circumference. That they were prohibited by their religion from war, and that murder and infidelity were equally unknown among the m.

They address their praises to the sun as the representatives of the being they adore ; for which purpose the whole village were summoned together at the rising and setting of that planet. When with united voices, and

and a solemn attention beyond what we had ever seen before, they performed their ceremonies.

These people are strangers to the use of flesh, and all kinds of spirituous liquors; they live to a great age and though vastly numerous, they populate so slow that it is very rare three children belong to one family. We saw some among them near 200 years old.

We were sent soon after we were found, to the High Priest or King of their nation, who attended with great pleasure the recital of our principles of religion, and the divine precepts of the scripture; but we informed him of the quarrels among christians, and their shedding so much blood to support their different sectaries, his astonishment was greater than can be conceived, & in his public declamations he often took occasion to return thanks that the vices of christians were unknown to them, as to practice.

We could have spent our lives among this people contentedly, and never should have thought of seeking for another home, but providence had ordered otherwise, and our return to our native country, after a long absence was effected by accident as follows:

On a little uninhabited island, about three leagues from the main, grows a sort of fruit, of which the inhabitants of the main are exceeding fond, and which, when dried, in taste, nearly resembles rich cake. The produce of this island is collected annually by the king's orders, and distributed throughout his dominions. The water craft made use of in this business, is very large and strong built boats, conveniently fixed for the purpose, and covered with a deck of skins, to prevent the fruit from getting wet. The annual produce of this island is computed to be equal to one half the bread consumed by the inhabitants in a year. And as the inhabitants are exceeding fond of milk with their cake of which they have a great plenty, it forms very considerable part of their living.

We had been so long among this hospitable people, that all their cares became ours, and we partook of all their amusements. We were with the party employed on the island business, and had nearly completed our landing, when a violent storm arose, which occasioned some of the boats to break their land-fast, and as none of the natives were in the boat with us, we were driven at the mercy of the winds and waves, and were soon out of sight of land. The storm still increasing, we lashed our helm and went below. Here we were obliged to remain several days, during which time we lost our rudder and masts.

We were driven in this situation 28 days, without any prospect of relief. We put up our earnest supplications to heaven for assistance, and returned unfeigned thanks for the signal interpositions of providence in our behalf. It was early in the morning of the 29th day, while we were at our devotions, that we discovered a ship to the south of us, and steering towards us—Though we had never hoped to see Europeans again, our joy at this discovery cannot easily be conceived or described. The ship proved to be a Russian frigate, just returned from a voyage of discoveries in the South Seas, who took us on board, and treated us with great humanity. Our fruit was of a kind they had not seen in their voyage, and on our arrival at St. Petersburg, we received a handsome price for our cargo, and a strong invitation to sail in her Imperial Majesty's service, in quest of the island we described, but our impatience to see our friends, prompted us to equip ourselves for our voyage to America. We accordingly left Petersburg, on board of an English vessel, bound to London, from whence we set sail for America in a few days after, and by the blessing of heaven, arrived safe in Virginia, on the 4th of Jan. 1786, to the great surprise and joy of our friends, after an absence of above six years and an half.

